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## President Shelly Hasn't Announced a LCR Settlement Position

**OAK SPRINGS, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said he is continuing to listen to Navajo people and their concerns about the Little Colorado River Water Settlement.

“The forum is not done and the Office of the President and Vice President is in the process of listening to you,” President Shelly said during the most recent community forum on April 20.

However, a press release with erroneous statements from the President at the meeting has created some controversy.

The release from Dine Hada Asidi wrongly stated that President Shelly said “I’m going to Washington, D.C. and stop this bill.”

Such an action would be contrary to the point of the town hall process to listen to the will of the people. During the discussion, which occurred primarily in Navajo, President Shelly said he remained committed to ensuring that the Navajo people continue to be consulted and involved in the process.

President Shelly used the Northwestern New Mexico Water Settlement Act as a reference point. During that time, President Shelly served as a Council Delegate and as a McKinley County Commissioner.

The President said that during the consideration for the New Mexico settlement local Navajo people were informed and part of the process that resulted in a successful resolution of Navajos claims on the San Juan River.

During the forum, nearly 20 people spoke about the settlement. More than 100 people from communities such as Tuba City, Lupton, Ganado and Oak Springs attended the

forum with some repeat attendees from previous forums.

The Little Colorado River Water Rights Settlement would bring more than \$350 million to the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe, all of which would be used to build water infrastructure in communities that desperately need running water.

The terms of the settlement would not come into effect until after the federal government has both fully funded and completed the projects. In the event funds are not provided as outlined the settlement becomes void.

“The truth of the matter is that we are likely to get more water as part of this settlement than we would if we litigated our claims nor we would not get the funding to bring drinking water to Navajo People,” said President Shelly in earlier statements.

The proposed settlement would:

- Provide the Navajo Nation unlimited right to N-Aquifer ground water for domestic and municipal uses (homes, hospitals, schools and others)
- Provide the Navajo Nation with the right to pump as much groundwater as it wants from the C-Aquifer, while placing limits on the amounts that non-Navajos (including the Hopi Tribe) can pump near the Navajo Reservation
- Protect the right to use all unappropriated surface water from the Little Colorado River
- Prohibit the construction of new reservoirs anywhere in the LCR basin without the consent of the Navajo Nation
- Prohibit new surface water irrigation by any party, except the Navajo Nation
- Recognize all historic and existing irrigation on the reservation
- Fund the critical infrastructure projects in Leupp-Dilkon and Ganado (and provide for operation and maintenance funding of these projects)

The settlement does not include resolve or waive Navajo claims to the larger Colorado River.

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